

**Summary of the
Program Policy and Structure Committee
July 29, 1997**

The Program Policy and Structure Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) convened in working session on Tuesday, July 29, 1997, at 12:30 p.m. CDT. The working session was held during the NELAC Third Annual Meeting in Dallas, Texas. The session was chaired by Dr. Kenneth W. Jackson of the New York State Department of Health.

The five-fold purpose of the meeting was to: a) discuss comments received from the NELAC Coordinating Committee that might impact the language in Chapter 1 of the NELAC Standards; b) discuss comments received from the EMMC Laboratory Accreditation Panel regarding Chapter 1; c) review changes made to the NELAC Constitution and Bylaws in response to comments from the NELAC Second Interim Meeting in Bethesda, MD; d) discuss changes currently proposed or made to Chapter 1 of the Standards in response to comments from the Second Interim Meeting; and e) discuss comments received from the Department of Defense (DOD). Dr. Jackson reminded everyone that the Constitution and Bylaws, as well as the Sections of the Standards, are living documents which will undergo more changes in the future.

Two individuals who will soon join the committee were introduced. They are Dr. Tito O. Madrid, Director of Field Operations for the New Mexico Environment Department and Dr. Abdil-Mehdi S. Ali, Laboratory Director at the Texas A&M University -Research Center.

A sign-up sheet for people interested in becoming committee members was made available, as was a general attendees sign-in sheet.

DISCUSSION OF COORDINATING COMMITTEE COMMENTS ON CHAPTER 1 OF THE NELAC STANDARDS

Dr. Jackson led a discussion concerning comments submitted to this Committee by the NELAC Coordinating Committee, chaired by Dr. James Pearson. Of the concerns raised by the Coordinating Committee, an issue dealing with reciprocity in Section 1.6.3 was deemed important enough to require referral to another committee. Concerns were raised by several attendees who want clarification of the actual instrument (e.g., memorandum of understanding) that will be used to establish reciprocity among states and federal laboratories. It was decided that this issue be referred to the Transition Committee. The balance of the comments supplied by the Coordinating Committee were deemed to be editorial in nature, and will be dealt with by this Committee following the Third Annual Meeting.

DISCUSSION OF EMMC LABORATORY ACCREDITATION PANEL COMMENTS ON CHAPTER 1 OF THE NELAC STANDARDS

Dr. Jackson led a discussion concerning comments submitted to this Committee by the EMMC Laboratory Accreditation Panel. A major point of concern by EMMC is the involvement of third party assessors in the approval of accreditation authorities. Because the Glossary to the NELAC

Standards clearly defines the makeup of assessment teams, and because this discussion is more directly related to Chapter 6 of the Standards, this Committee took no further action.

Action was taken on several specific EMMC recommendations. The word “all” was deleted from Section 1.6.1.1 (d). Section 1.7.2 to revised so that recommendations of ELAB be presented to EPA as well as the NELAC Board of Directors. Section 1.7.3 was modified to state that, in all cases involving appeals brought to the AARB, the final decision remains with the NELAC Director. Several other comments from EMMC were deemed editorial in nature and tabled for review following the Third Annual Meeting. There was much discussion about the example “tiered approach” described in Section 1.9.1, given that many of the citations used are already outdated. The committee agreed to take this into consideration after the Third Annual Meeting. Further discussion of the use of the terms “analyte” and “analyte class” was also tabled for action by the Committee at a later date.

REVIEW OF CHANGES MADE TO THE NELAC CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AS A RESULT OF THE NELAC SECOND INTERIM MEETING

Dr. Jackson reviewed all the changes made to the Constitution and Bylaws as a result of comments received during and after the NELAC Interim Meeting in Bethesda, MD. Several global changes were made: a) replacing Conference with NELAC to avoid confusion regarding the name given to the annual and interim meetings; b) replacing member(s) with participant(s); and c) replacing U.S. EPA with EPA.

Dr. Jackson then reviewed several changes to the Constitution and Bylaws requested by EPA because that Agency cannot in any way involve itself with fiduciary activities. Article VII of the Constitution, and Article II, Section 1, and Article V, Sections 6 and 7 of the Bylaws were removed and all subsequent Articles renumbered. Concern was expressed, in light of removal of references to fees, regarding financial support for future NELAC meetings. Everyone was reminded that the financial support for future meetings will come from registration fees coming from the sponsoring state or state agency.

A question arose regarding the number of EPA Offices referred to as being in the House of Representative as described on Page 15. Any change in the number of EPA Offices would necessitate a change in the Bylaws.

A question was raised regarding the manner in which NELAC ensures that those who vote in voting sessions are authorized to do so. At the NELAC Second Annual Meeting colored name tags, with colored dots were used to distinguish Representatives and Delegates from other attendees. A colored dot is being used at the Third Annual Meeting. It was recommended that the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, host of next years Fourth Annual Meeting, be alerted of this concern.

DISCUSSION OF CHANGES IN CHAPTER 1 OF THE NELAC STANDARDS CURRENTLY PROPOSED OR MADE IN RESPONSE TO COMMENTS FROM THE SECOND INTERIM MEETING

Dr. Jackson reviewed those changes made to Chapter 1 as a result of comments from the Second Interim Meeting. They included: a) removal of a sentence from Paragraph 4 of Section 1.1.3; b) rephrasing of Section 1.6.1.1 (c) and (e) and addition of (g); and c) adding a lead-in sentence to Paragraph 2 of Section 1.6.2.3.1. Dr. Jackson reported that Section 1.7.3 had been rewritten to combine two sections from the previous version of Chapter 1. He also reported that Section 1.8.3 regarding meeting registration fees had been deleted. He added that Section 1.9.1 had undergone substantial rewording since the Second Interim Meeting with most changes made for clarification purposes. In Section 1.9.3 all references to laboratory health and safety issues were deleted. Finally, Section 1.9.9 covering Microscopy Requirements was added to the text of the chapter and to Figure 1-3.

DISCUSSION OF DOD COMMENTS TO CHAPTER 1 OF THE NELAC STANDARDS

Thirty-two specific issues were directed to this Committee by Curtis Bowling, Acting Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense. Of the nineteen issues concerning Chapter 1, almost all were considered editorial in nature by the Committee and action was tabled until after the Third Annual Meeting. Several items involving Chapter 1 were discussed at length. One concerned DoE and/or DOD representation on future NELAC Boards of Directors, since DoE and DOD are the largest single users of environmental test data in the United States. The Committee decided to refer this issue to the EPA and/or the NELAC Board of Directors for discussion. DOD comments 7 and 17 concerning Chapter 1 had been addressed through earlier discussions of this working session.

The four items related to the Constitution and the nine items related to the Bylaws were all deemed to be editorial in nature and further action by the Committee was tabled until after the Third Annual Meeting.

DISCUSSION OF OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES REGARDING CHAPTER 1 OF THE NELAC STANDARDS

Comments were received from the North Dakota State Department of Health and Consolidated Laboratories regarding contradictory sentences in Sections 1.6.2.3 and 1.6.2.3.1. Because neither the Committee members nor session attendees could identify the contradiction, no action was taken. Pauline Bouchard agreed to contact Errol Erickson, from North Dakota for clarification of that Agency's concern.

Several comments received from Paul Baker, the state representative to NELAC from Pennsylvania, were deemed editorial in nature and tabled for action following the Third Annual Meeting.

Marlene Moore, a member of the Program, Policy and Structure Committee, requested that the Committee give further review to Section 1.8.2.1 and 1.8.2.2 regarding the 30-day, 60-day, and 90-day deadlines for various NELAC committee and meeting activities. The Committee suggested that they might want to ask the NELAC Board of Directors for permission to devote a session to these deadline policies at the next interim meeting. Dr. Jackson planned to comment on this issue at the Closing Plenary Session of the Third Annual Meeting, and to request input from meeting attendees by way of their meeting evaluation forms.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
Program Policy and Structure Committee
July 29, 1997

Name	Affiliation	Phone Numbers
Kenneth Jackson, Chair	New York State Department of Health	Tel: 518/485-5570 Fax: 518/485-5568 E-mail: jackson@wadsworth.org
Pauline Bouchard	Minnesota Department of Health	Tel: 612/623-5331 Fax: 612/623-5514 E-mail: pauline.bouchard@health.state.mn.us
Stephen Clark (absent)	USEPA Office of Water	Tel: 202/260-7159 Fax: 202/260-4383 E-mail: clark.stephen@epamail.epa.gov
Marcia Davies (absent)	US Army Corps of Engineers	Tel: 402/697-2555 Fax: 402/697-2595 E-mail: marciacdavies@usace.army.mil
Roberta Luna	City of Longmont Water/Waste Water	Tel: 303/651-8666 Fax: 303/682-9543 E-mail:
Thomas McAninch	Eastman Chemical Company	Tel: 903/237-5473 Fax: 903/237-6395 E-mail: twmcan@eastman.com
Marlene Moore	Advanced Systems, Inc.	Tel: 302/834-9796 Fax: 302/995-1086 E-mail: mmoore@advancedsys.com
Jerry Parr	Quanterra Environmental Svcs	Tel: 303/421-6611 Fax: 303/467-9136 E-mail: jerryparr@msn.com
Patricia Royal (absent)	Springborn Laboratories, Inc.	Tel: 508/295-2550 Fax: 508/295-8107 E-mail: proyal@springborn.com
Bruce Harvey, support contractor	Research Triangle Institute	Tel: 919/541-6573 Fax: 919/541-7386 E-mail: bwh@rti.org
Helen Reading support contractor	Research Triangle Institute	Tel: 202/728-2044 Fax: 202/728-2095 E-mail: hmr@rti.org